

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS HANOI 001940

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [CB](#) [VM](#) [ETMIN](#) [HUMANR](#)

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL MONITORING OF RETURNED MIGRANTS

REF: Hanoi 1865 and previous.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: UNHCR's Vietnamese Chief of Mission returned from the Central Highlands where he met 30 of the 94 recently repatriated ethnic minority migrants. They are in good condition and being treated well, he said. The regional representative from UNHCR based in Bangkok will visit Ho Chi Minh City, the Central Highlands, and Hanoi next week and will also meet the returnees. Embassy and ConGen officers will meet the UNHCR representative before and after his trip to the Central Highlands. U.S. Mission officers will also seek to go to the Central Highlands in September for a follow-up visit to meet with the returned migrants. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Poloff spoke to Vu Anh Son, Chief of Mission, UNHCR Hanoi in Hanoi July 29. Son was just back from Bangkok, where he participated in a training session on refugee rights and refugee law for Thai, Lao and Vietnamese officials, including Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Ministry of Public Security (MPS) representatives. Before that (July 22) Son had been in Pleiku in the Central Highlands province of Gia Lai. In Pleiku, he met with 30 of the 94 screened-out ethnic minority migrants who were repatriated from Cambodia on July 20.

¶3. (SBU) Son said he met the migrants at the reception center, which is run by the Department of Trade and Tourism, in Pleiku. Son was given permission to visit freely with the 34 migrants who were still there, and had time to meet 30 of them; he said 56 of them had already returned to their villages in Gia Lai. (An additional four are residents of Kon Tum province and were not received in Pleiku.) Son said he was not observed or accompanied by GVN officials other than the provincial officials working on providing food, medicine, documents and clothing to the migrants.

¶4. (SBU) Son said the attitudes of the migrants he spoke with ranged from "happy to be back" to "apprehensive about the reception they might find in their home villages." He noted that he was completely free to talk to anyone he wanted for as long as he wanted, without any intrusion or eavesdropping by officials. As far as Son could tell, the migrants were being treated well; they had received food and were receiving medical care from doctors and nurses who were provincial employees. Most, he said, had received new clothes.

¶5. (SBU) Poloff also spoke July 28 with Bhairaja Panday, UNHCR Deputy Regional Representative for Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. Panday confirmed that UNHCR Regional Representative Hasim Utkan will visit Vietnam, including the Central Highlands, August 1-4. Utkan will arrive in Ho Chi Minh City and join Vietnam Chief of Mission Son August 1, meet with ConGen officials the morning of August 2, then fly to Pleiku. Utkan and Son will then visit returned migrants in Gia Lai. They will return to Hanoi August 5, and will meet with Ambassador Marine before Utkan returns to Bangkok.

¶6. (SBU) ConGen Ho Chi Minh City had planned to send a team (to include a political officer and a representative from the Refugee Resettlement Section) in early August to meet with the returnees; however, in light of the visit by the UNHCR representative next week, we believe it will be more effective to postpone that visit by one month in order to space out the international presence in the Central Highlands and contact with the migrants. So far, the GVN has presented no resistance to UNHCR efforts to meet with the migrants. MPS officials told Hanoi Poloff that MPS has "no problem" with the USG visit in principle, though we will still have to solicit permission from local officials. MFA officials have said they will facilitate a visit. We have yet to test GVN willingness by submitting the necessary written notification to visit Gia Lai and asking to meet with local officials and ethnic minority returnees.

MARINE